

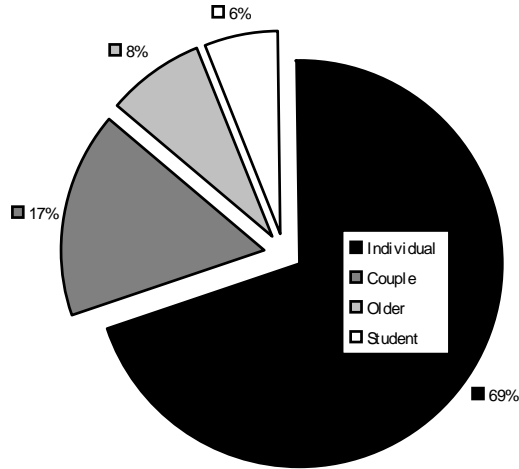
**NZAC**

Membership Survey

August 2005

## Demographics

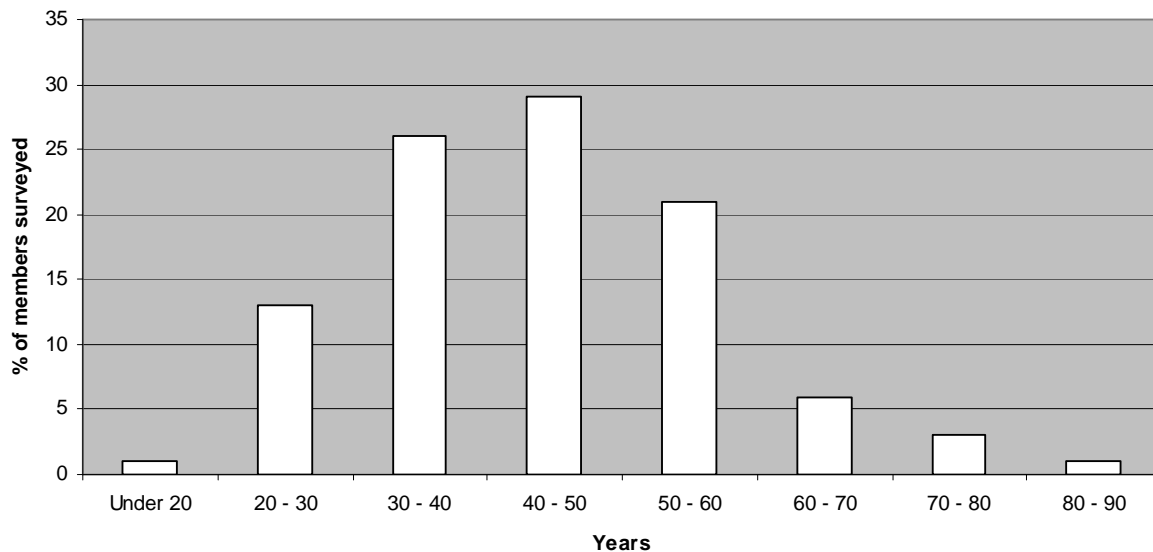
Almost 70% of club members are full individual members. The second largest group is couples, as indicated by primary or secondary membership categories.



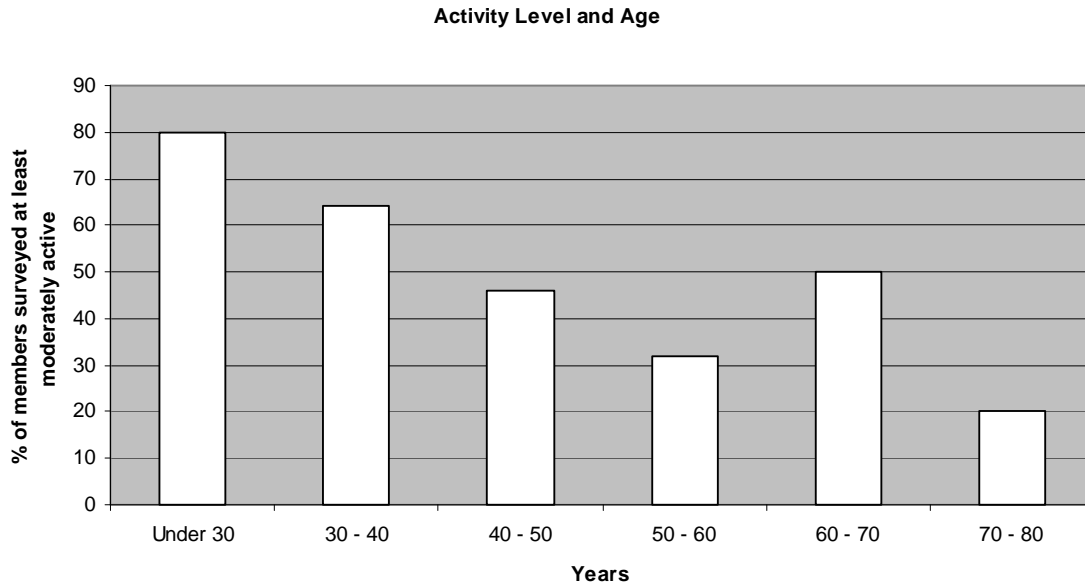
There is a significant difference in membership category ratios between men and women. Individual women are underrepresented, with 41% of women members part of a club-member couple, as opposed to 12% of men. It may be that encouraging more women members to join on their own is an opportunity to strengthen the club. Alternatively the data may simply indicate that outdoor women don't stay single long!

On a more serious note, the age of club members is centred around 40 to 50 years. Only 14% of club members are under 30 years old. This is in stark contrast to the age distribution of the general climbing population found by a major survey of 14,400 people by NFL research in 2001. Of the 360 people who climbed regularly or occasionally (either alpine or rock), approximately 55% were under 30. It is important to try to understand why so few younger climbers are apparently attracted to the club, and attempt to rectify any issues identified. This is because increased numbers of younger members would both strengthen the club in the immediate future, and improve its long-term viability.

Age of Members



Within the club, the younger climbers are also the most active members, over a wide range of activities. More details of how these activity levels were estimated are given in Appendix 1. Note that the apparently high activity level of the 60 –70 year old age group is probably the result of small sample size rather than a true anomaly in the trend of generally decreasing activity with age.



As a final point of interest, all survey participants who replied to the ethnicity question were a variation of European descent. This is at odds with NZ's increasing ethnic diversity. An area for long-term development of the club may be looking at ways of interesting other ethnicities into climbing.

## **Membership Satisfaction**

Two bar charts were used to address the question of member satisfaction with club services. The first bar chart is a comparison of the relative importance and performance rankings of the 21 club services included in the survey. In essence, if the performance ranking is higher than the importance, the club is performing well in that service, and vice versa. Note that this method does tend to overestimate the performance of services that are viewed as relatively unimportant.

The club service performance bar chart therefore indicates that the club's major publications are its star performer, with the magazine, journal and both rock and alpine guide books all performing well. The alpine and base huts appear to require only a small improvement to reach the desired standard. Recreational advocacy and the website are services which should probably be improved. However, the biggest opportunities for substantial improvement appears to be in section newsletters, advanced climbing courses, travel insurance and section trips.

The second bar chart shows the percentage of members surveyed who rated a service as important and the number of members surveyed who were dissatisfied with that service. This bar chart gives clear information on the small but important numbers of members who are dissatisfied with a particular service, but is more susceptible to noise than the other bar chart.

Similar trends were again seen, with the club publications, as a group, having the lowest level of dissatisfaction and very high importance. All members surveyed were also satisfied with alpine huts although some areas of dissatisfaction with base huts need to be addressed. The website and travel insurance again show some room for improvement, although there is little dissatisfaction with recreational advocacy. Section trips and section newsletters were again highlighted as the main areas where substantial improvement is required. Section evenings also received the third highest level of dissatisfaction, but advanced climbing courses appeared more positive than on the previous chart. This bar chart also supports the assumption that the Club Service Performance bar chart tends to overestimate the performance of services that are viewed as relatively unimportant.

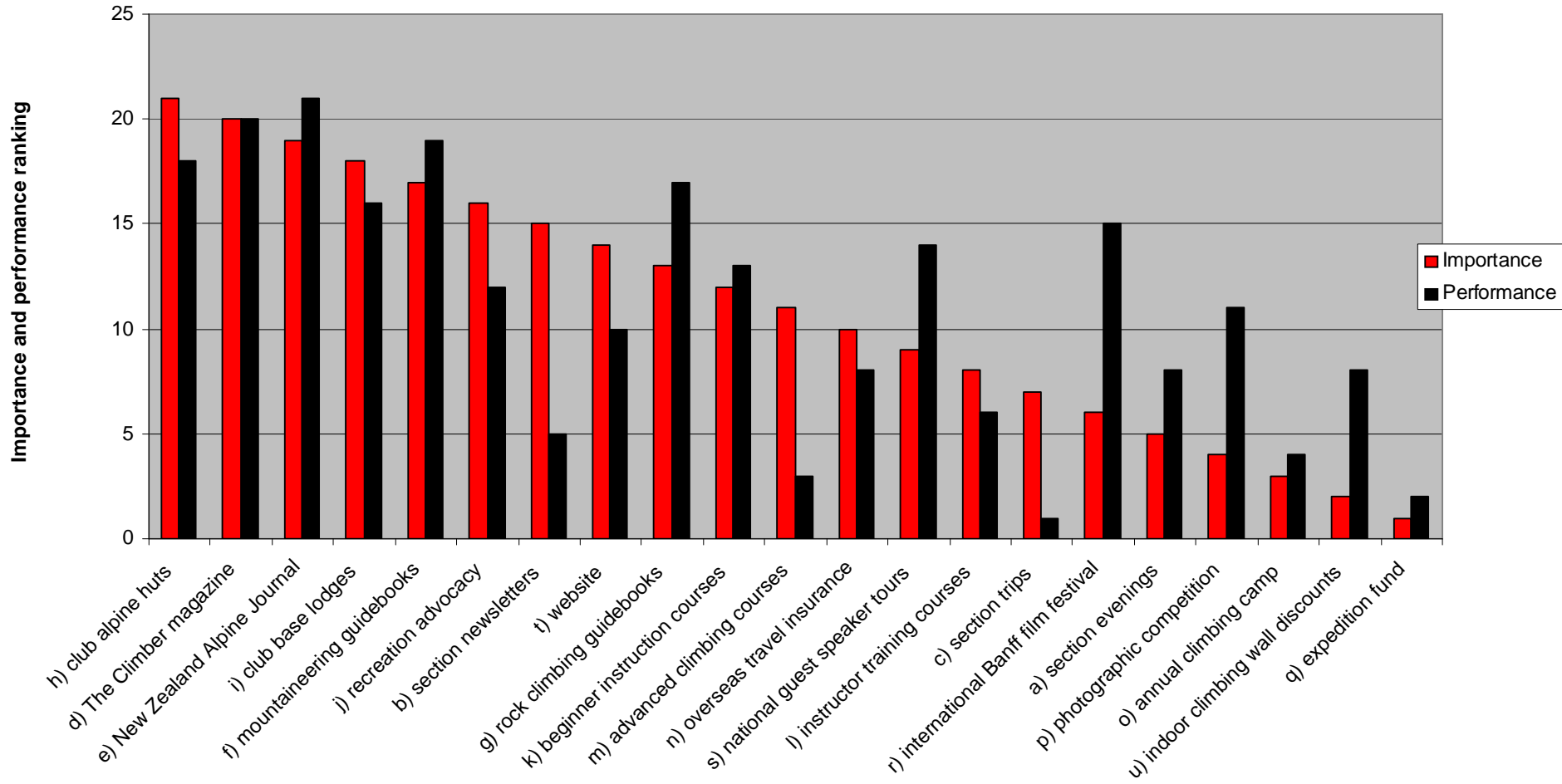
Further details of the analysis and interpretation method are given in Appendix 2.

### **Conclusion**

- The publications are without exception excellent
- Huts are generally O.K. but base huts require some improvement
- The website and travel insurance should be improved where possible
- Section trips and newsletters must be the focus of efforts to strengthen the club

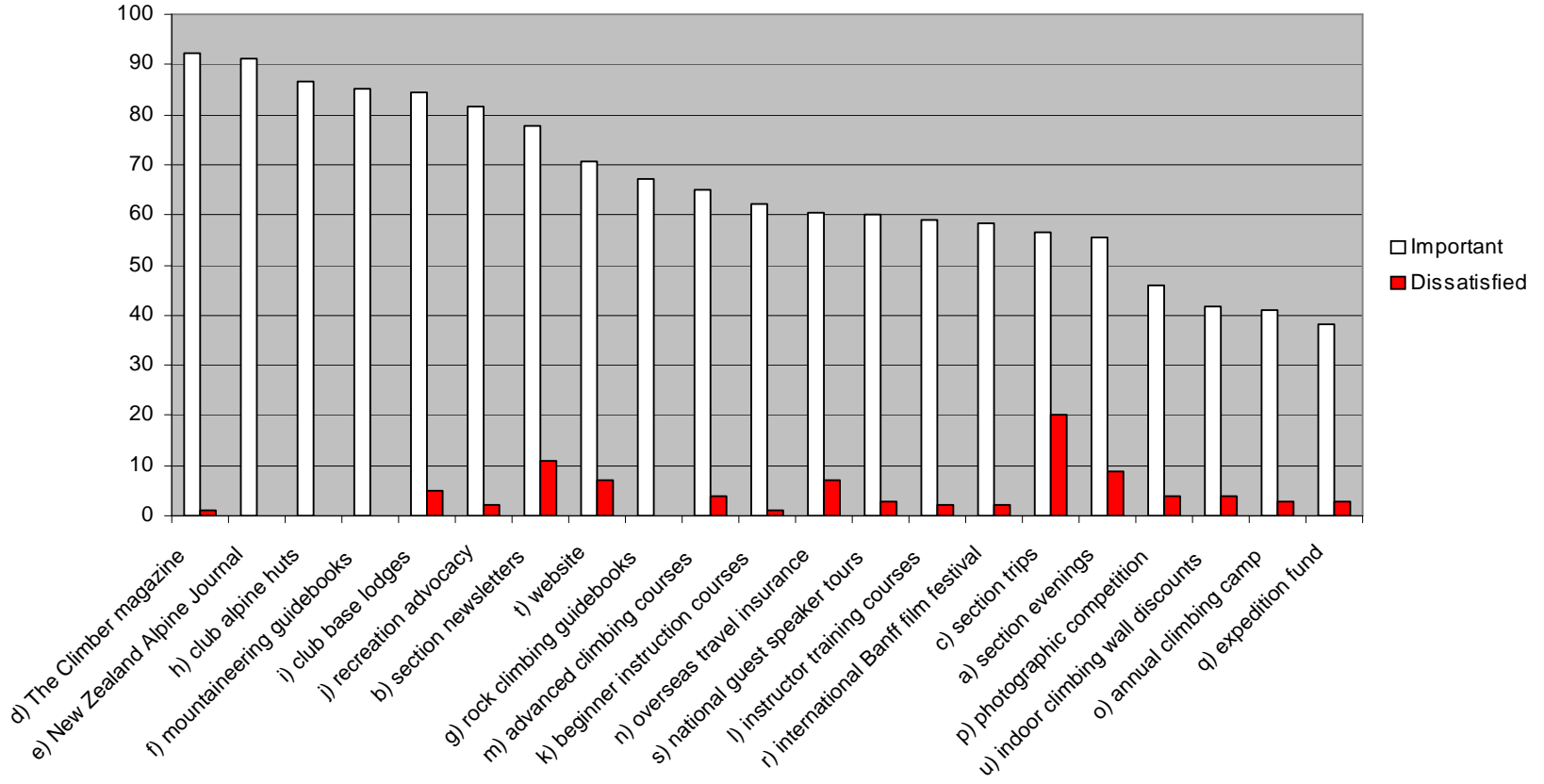
The performance ratings for section trips, newsletters and evenings are given for each section in Appendix 3.

## Club Service Performance



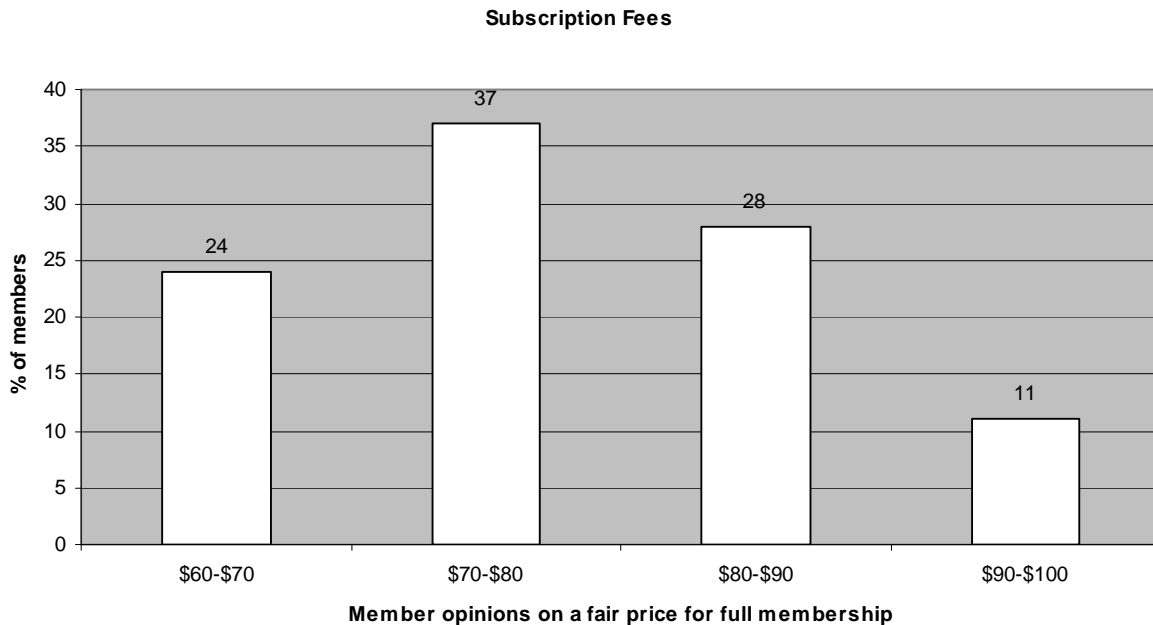
## Club Service Dissatisfaction

% of members who viewed a service as important and number of members dissatisfied with that service



## Subscription Fees

The following bar chart shows the percentage of members who believe each of four price brackets is the fairest price for full membership of NZAC. 61% of members surveyed believe a fair price is at or below the current level. Obviously this bar chart will be biased towards the lower prices, as people simply don't want to pay more.

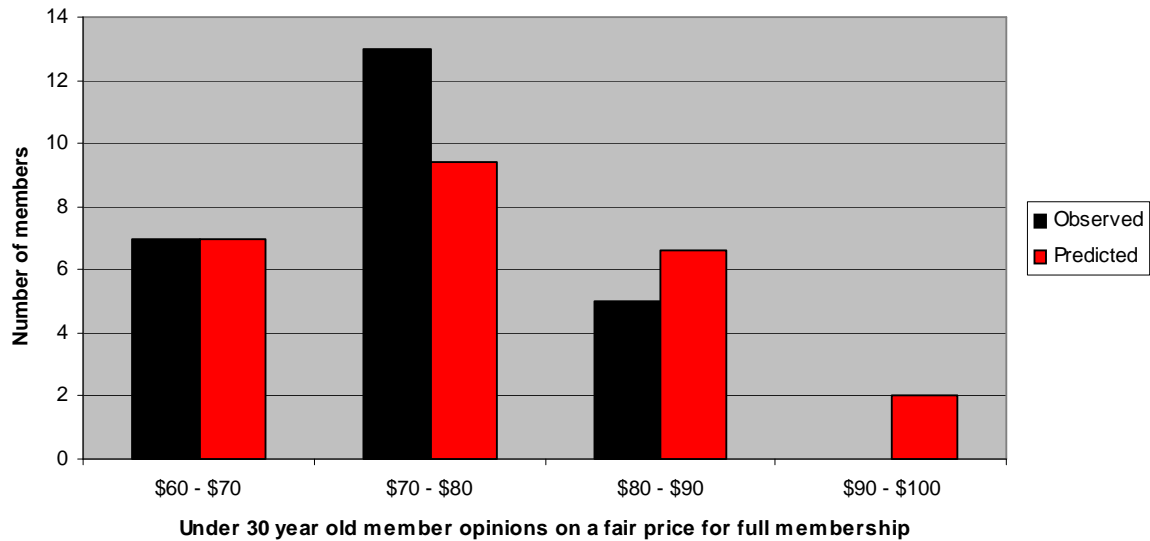


Members' opinions on what is a fair price will be influenced by their income, although opinions appear to be even more influenced by members' age. For example no members over 70 or under 30 years old believe a membership subscription between \$90 and \$100 is fair. Bar charts supporting these points are given in Appendix 4. However, whether opinions on subscriptions are truly related to age, or just the result of lower incomes in certain age brackets, needs to be established.

This question was addressed first for club members under 30. The income brackets and subscription opinions for the whole club were used to predict 'age independent' opinions for a group with incomes matching the under 30s'. The calculation method is detailed in Appendix 5. Predicted and observed numbers of members, under 30, who believe each fee bracket is fair, are displayed in the bar chart below. The observed values are more heavily weighted towards the lower subscription fees than the predicted values. This demonstrates that, regardless of their income, members under 30 tend to believe fair membership subscription fees are lower than the rest of the club believes.

If these age related income and opinion trends are representative of the non-member climbing community, they may explain why only 14% of members surveyed were under 30 (see Demographics). In other words: would lower subscription fees lead to greater numbers of NZAC members under 30? It may be that subscription fees are not the dominant cause of low numbers of younger members. However, this possibility must be considered carefully as the demographic data indicates membership age is an important issue for the club.

### Subscription Fees for Members Under 30



Members' opinions of appropriate subscription fees within the over 70 age group were also substantially different from the average views. The reduced activity levels of members in this age group (see Demographics) means these members will probably receive less benefit from club membership, and therefore will deem the fair subscription fee to be lower. It does not appear useful to try to establish the relative contributions of income, age, and reduced activity to older members' subscription opinions. This is because reduced opportunity to benefit from club services means that it is equitable to offer these members a discount on their subscription fees, whatever the reason for their opinion.

### Conclusion

- A little over 1/2 of members surveyed believe that full subscription fees should be at or below the current level
- Younger club members perceive fair subscription fees to be lower than older club members, regardless of their income
- Younger club members also have slightly lower incomes, which again inclines them towards wanting lower fees
- Older club members should be entitled to a discount because of their lower activity levels

Note that these results provide no information on whether or not there are significant numbers of climbers who would join the club if subscription fees were lower.